



## THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Official Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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# Iraqi Soldiers Take Lead



An Iraqi Army Soldier leads Coalition and other IA Soldiers during a clearance mission in the Mahmudiyah area that started Operation Marne Piledriver April 15. U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Christopher McKenna, 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT).

### FORWARD OPERATING BASE

**MAHMUDIYAH** — Operation Marne Piledriver launched in the Mahmudiyah area April 15 as Iraqi Army and Coalition forces conducted joint clearance missions.

Soldiers with 1st and 2nd Battalions, 25th Brigade, 6th IA Division and 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) combined to conduct dismounted patrols and an air assault.

“The Iraqi Soldiers took initiative from the start,” said Pfc. Nathan Krueger, from St. Clair, Mich., Battery A, 3-320th FA. “Every time I went into a building, there would already be an IA Soldier clearing or searching the area. Once we got on-site, they took the lead.”

Marne Piledriver is the first Task Force Marne major operation focused on capacity-building projects throughout the Rakkasans’ area of operation. This Iraqi Army-led operation will continue efforts to root out insurgency and stimulate economic growth and development throughout the Mahmudiyah Qada.

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## Iraqi Police Host Free Medical Clinic

**BAGHDAD** — Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers observed the policemen from the 7th brigade, 2nd national police division, in action first-hand during a free medical clinic April 9-11 for the citizens of the Doura community in the Rashid District of northern Baghdad.

The national police battalion, charged with providing security for the residents of the mulhallas located in southern Baghdad, took time in a gesture of community service to provide free medical screening and treatment for the citizens of Doura from their joint security station, which is

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**Press Conference:** Operational Update from Baghdad

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Iraqi Special Operations Forces soldiers load into an Iraqi Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft at New Al Muthana Air Base, Iraq, in preparation for a flight to Basra, Iraq. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Allen.

## Basra Progress Continues

**BASRAH** — Operation Sawlat al-Fursan, or Charge of the Knights, entered a new phase of operations in Basrah.

The operation, which began March 24, has now started the process of clearing strongholds previously dominated by criminal militias.

A deliberate house-to-house clearance operation of the south-western Basrah district of al-Qiblah was conducted without major incident. It resulted in significant quantities of arms, ammunition and explosives being found. To date, Coalition forces involvement has been minimal, reflecting the ever increasing ability and resolve of the Iraqi Security Forces to enforce the rule of law.

Iraqi operations in al-Qiblah to date have yielded an improvised explosive device

factory, numerous weapons handed over by locals, or left in the streets, in addition to two significant arms cache finds with numerous IEDs, mortars and RPGs.

Operations have not been limited to Basra. A senior al-Qaeda in Iraq leader was arrested at an Iraqi Army checkpoint in the small town of Abu al-Khasib 20 kilometers southeast of Basrah.

Coalition forces continue to provide 24-hour-a-day airborne surveillance over the city for the ISF. On several occasions, CF fighter aircraft provided “shows of force” in support of ISF troops on the ground and remain ready to provide air support if required.

Elsewhere, United Kingdom and United

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## Increased Security Brings New Commerce

**HAWIJAH** — A young man beginning a business to support his new family is not necessarily headline news. However, for Kusai, 24, his dream would be realized in the heart of what was once considered an extremists’ stronghold only six months prior - Hawijah, Iraq.

Hawijah, located approximately 60 miles south of Kirkuk City in the Kirkuk province, historically held center stage to the region’s worst violence against civilians, Iraq security forces, and coalition forces by extremists. The residents here faced anywhere from 10 to 15 attacks per day, according to military records. Soldiers report that day-time patrols were targeted with small arms fire throughout the city and routinely upon exiting the confines of Forward Operating Base McHenry where Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division are located.

Since the establishment of Sahwah - meaning “reconciliation” or “awakening” to locals, overall violence in this predominantly Sunni-Arab populated region of northeastern Iraq, has experienced nearly an 80 percent drop in violent activity, according to

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## Soldiers Helping Refurbish Two Schools in Mahmudiyah

### FORWARD OPERATING BASE

**MAHMUDIYAH** — In conjunction with Operation Marne Piledriver, two Mahmudiyah schools are being refurbished with the help of U.S. Soldiers.

The Red Knight Rakkasans of 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), coordinated the funding needed to improve the schools.

The Uthman School in High al-Jaza’ir and the Omah al-Mukhtar Girls’ School in the Qadasiyah Apartments were selected

for refurbishment.

“These are the schools identified by the Iraqi Ministry of Education and the Mayor of Mahmudiyah as most in need for improvements,” said Capt. David Howald, Commander’s Emergency Response Program project manager for 3-320th FA.

Improving the schools shows that education has once again become a priority for the people in the area, said Capt. Benjamin Torpy, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3-320th FA.

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A civil military operations officer with 101st Abn. Div. goes over plans for the Omah al-Mukhtar Girls’ School in the Qadasiyah.